



# Coaching for School Improvement

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## Linking Indicators with Outcomes

Over the past decade, educators have committed much time and energy to becoming proficient data analysts. They have learned to use tools to “query the data” to better understand what students know and are able to do. Teachers and administrators have developed an appreciation for data – both qualitative and quantitative – and have come to value how it can inform their decision making.

One school just recently introduced to Indistar worried that their investment in building their capacity to make good use of student achievement data would be diminished if they adopted Indistar and focused attention on the research-based indicators. How would their “data team” structure integrate with the “instructional teams” mentioned in the indicators? Would they still make use of the skills they developed to critically examine student outcomes across multiple measures?

We had a conversation about “inputs” and “outcomes” and looked at how the Indistar indicators can help schools make the connection between the “inputs” – curriculum, instruction, policies and practices – and the “outcomes” – student achievement. They recognized they often reach a point in their data analysis conversations where they know their students’ strengths and gaps with a high degree of confidence, but bog down at the question, “Now what?” We talked about how Indistar indicators can help them answer the “now what?” question by focusing on those educational practices that have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness.

We looked at one particular indicator to judge how Indistar might ‘fit’ into their data culture:

Instructional Teams use student learning data to plan instruction.

The school’s assessment of its current level of implementation of this practice will generate important discussion about how teachers have made use of their rich collection of student data. They can rate this indicator a top priority to reinforce their school’s data focus. Given their intensive investment in training teachers to become proficient in data analysis, they can select “relatively easy to address” for the opportunity rating.

Have your schools worried that they will have to set aside their existing data-based decision making initiatives in order to engage with Indistar? Have you been able to show how Indistar “supplements, not supplants” existing improvement efforts? Share your stories with us.  
Thanks, Karen